

Glaucoma Awareness

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness. It occurs when the fluid pressure inside the eye damages the optic nerve, resulting in a permanent loss of vision. Like diabetes and high blood pressure, glaucoma can be controlled with many forms of treatment, but currently cannot be cured.

Glaucoma is often called “the sneak thief of sight”. In most cases, there is no pain or other signal to warn the victim that they have this disease and risk blindness. Glaucoma generally strikes adults and becomes more common with increasing age. Adults of all races whose mothers, maternal relatives, or siblings have glaucoma are at greater risk of getting glaucoma than the general population. People of African descent have seven times more risk of getting this disease than Caucasians or Asians. Diabetes and nearsightedness are also risk factors. Although glaucoma is rare in children, we still check them as early as age four or five.

The best way to prevent blindness from glaucoma is early detection through annual comprehensive eye examinations. As Florida board-certified optometric physicians, **Dr. Shepard, Dr. Jacobs, and Dr. Hardy** are licensed to diagnose, manage, and treat eye disease, including glaucoma. Your eyes are tested in different ways for glaucoma using the most advanced clinical instruments available. We measure your eye pressure (tonometry) and compare the results against previous measurements, measure your peripheral vision (visual fields), measure corneal thickness, and stereoscopically evaluate your optic nerves through dilated pupils.

People with risk factors, elevated eye pressure, suspiciously shaped optic nerves, partially blocked drainage systems (narrow angles), or reduced peripheral vision should be evaluated **two** to **four** times per year.

A person diagnosed with glaucoma must have their eye pressure measured **four** times per year, and have visual fields and comprehensive dilated eye examinations **once** or **twice** per year.

All current forms of treatment for glaucoma are designed to preserve vision by reducing the amount of fluid entering the eye or increasing fluid drainage. The most common treatment is medicated eye drops. Depending on the type and severity of glaucoma, treatment may also include laser or other outpatient surgical procedures.

With today's technology and medical advances, glaucoma can be successfully managed and treated in the vast number of cases. The key to maintaining vision is early detection and careful long-term monitoring. Don't gamble with your precious eyesight!

I have read this information and understand that following Dr. Shepard's, Dr. Jacobs' and/or Dr. Hardy's guidelines is important to maintaining healthy eyes and reducing the risk of vision loss from glaucoma.

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____